

“The State Of Our Church!”
People Of Praise!
Revelation 1:4-6

Introduction:

1. Just As Nearly Every Year The President Of The United States Brings A “State Of The Union” Address – The Lord Has Done The Same Thing For Us Through The First 3 Chapters Of Revelation!
 - To Help Us Understand The “State Of Our Church!”
2. What Is The State Of Our Church?
 - As We Looked At Last Week, If Our Primary Ministry Is The Word Of God – The Faithful Receiving / Sharing / Applying Of God’s Word – Then, The State Of Our Church Will Be Strong!
3. But There Are Other Features That Need To Be Present As Well!
 - See The Next One In 1:4-6 – Which Is A Greeting From John, The Inspired Author Of This Letter, To The Seven Churches In The Ancient Roman Province Of Asia! (Turkey)
 - But This Is No Ordinary Greeting! It’s Not Just A “Dear Sir Or Madame!” Or A “To Whom It May Concern!” It Is A Greeting Between Brothers In Christ! And It Breaks Out Into Great Praise For The One Who Brought Them Into This Family!
 - Read Text!
4. We See From This That: We Ought To Be A People Of Praise!
 - This Ought To Be A Major Feature Of Our Church!
 - Why We Have “Praise & Testimony” Times!
 - Ought To Have Them More Frequently & Longer Lasting!
 - And John, Even Through This Greeting, Gives Us Many Reasons To Praise Right Along With Him!
5. You Might Not Feel Like Praising God Right Now!
 - Because Of What Your Week Has Been Like – Or Because Of How You Are Feeling Today – Or Because Of Something That Happened Even This Afternoon!
 - But Think About John! Where Was He Writing This? From The Small Island Of Patmos (1:9)! Why From There? Because He Was In Exile – On “Island Arrest” – For “The Word Of God & For The Testimony Of Jesus Christ!”
 - He Was Not On Vacation!
 - He Was Being “Persecuted For Righteousness’ Sake!”
 - So In Order To Praise God, We Must, Like John, Take Our Eyes Off Of Ourselves & Our Circumstances & Put Them On God!
6. And When You Do, You Will Find That There Are Many Reasons To Be People Of Praise!
 1. ***Because Of The Great Gift Of Grace And Peace! (1:4a)***
 - 1:4a - “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace!”
 - This Is A Very Common Greeting In The Early Church!
 - Paul Uses This Greeting In Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Phillipians, Colossians, & Timothy! Peter Uses This Greeting In His Epistles! John Uses It Here And In 2nd John!
 - But Even Though It Is Common To These Authors, We Must Never Overlook Its Meaning & Significance!
 - Grace & Peace Are Truly The Greatest Gifts To Us!
 - Grace Is The Refreshing Spring From Which Our Salvation Flows From God!
 - Peace Is The Delightful Result From Drinking From That Spring Of Grace!
 - And So, John Both Desires & Requests (Prays) That The Blessings Of Grace & Peace Be Upon Them! Because:
 - This Gift Is Humbling!
 - Grace Is The Favor & Blessing Of God Upon Someone That Does Not Deserve It!
 - It Is Completely By His Choice, Which Is Based Upon His Own Reasons!
 - When You Realize That You Don’t Deserve The Grace & Peace Of God – And Did Nothing For It – Then, You Will Be In The Best Position To Praise Him For It!
 - It Is Not Something God Owes You!
 - It Is Not Something You Earned Or Deserved!

- This Gift Is Harmonizing!
 - Because Of “Grace Alone” – God Provides Real Peace To Those Who Are True Christians!
 - A Peace With God!
 - Which Was Our Greatest Need!
 - And Ultimately, A Peace With Men!
 - Romans 5:1 - “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!”
 - Because Of The Great Gift Of Grace And Peace:
 - We Ought To Be People Of Praise!

2. *Because Of The Great Provider Of Grace And Peace! (1:4b-5a)*

- 1:4b-5a - “From him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; / And from Jesus Christ!”
 - Of Course, The Only Source For Real “Grace & Peace” – The Kind That Really Matters – Is God!
 - And In These Verses, We Have A Detailed Description Of God As A Trinity!
 - And Because Grace & Peace Are From God, It Is:
 - A Permanent Blessing!
 - God The Father Is Described As “Him Which Is, And Which Was, And Which Is To Come!”
 - From The Very Beginning, God Was Described As The Infinite, Eternal & Unchangeable One!
 - Past / Present / Future – He Is God! Psalm 90:2 - “From Everlasting To Everlasting, Thou Art God!”
 - Because God Is Permanent!
 - His Grace And Peace Are Permanent!
 - His Grace And Peace Will Last As Long As He Does!
 - No Matter What We Face In This Life & On This Earth!
 - For This He Deserves Our Praise!
 - A Plentiful Blessing!
 - God The Holy Spirit Is Described As “The Seven Spirits Which Are Before His Throne!”
 - Why Is He Described As “Seven Spirits?” Is This Really Talking About The Holy Spirit?
 - Yes - Remember That This Verse Is Talking About The Source Of Grace & Peace – Must Be God!
 - Why “Seven Spirits” Then?
 - Seven Is A Symbolic Number Throughout Scripture, Describing Fulness / Completion / Abundance!
 - In Isaiah 11:2, The Spirit Displays Himself As A “Seven-Fold Spirit” - “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD!”
 - So, Because The Holy Spirit Is Plentiful!
 - His Grace And Peace Are Plentiful!
 - Providing The All The Grace & Peace We Need, Whenever We Need It!
 - For This He Deserves Our Praise!
 - A Personal Blessing!
 - God The Son Is Named: Jesus Christ!
 - The Grace And Peace We Need Is Made Personally Accessible Through Jesus Christ!
 - Because Of The Great Provider Of Grace And Peace:
 - We Ought To Be People Of Praise!

3. *Because Of The Great Offer Of Grace And Peace! (1:5b)*

- 1:5b - “Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth!”
 - Jesus Christ Is Further Described In Three Ways, That Show Us How He Could Offer To Us His Grace And Peace!

- He Was Qualified To Do So!
- As Prophet, He Offers The Grace Of His Truth!
 - “The Faithful Witness!”
 - Without Truth, There Can Be No Peace With God!
 - There Is Just Ignorance & Lies!
 - But Jesus Christ Came To Graciously Offer Truth To Us!
 - The Truth About Our Sin!
 - The Truth About God! Righteous / Holy!
 - The Truth About Salvation!
 - He Had To Die! Witness Can Also Be Translated “Martyr!”
 - John 1:17 - “Grace And Truth Came By Jesus Christ!”
- As Priest, He Offers The Grace Of His Life!
 - “The First Begotten Of The Dead!”
 - Without Life, There Can Be No Peace With God!
 - There Is Just Death & Separation!
 - But Jesus Christ Came To Graciously Offer Life To Us!
 - He Is The “First-Born” From The Dead!
 - The “First That Rose From The Dead By His Own Power!”
 - He Was The One Who Had To Break The Barrenness Of The Womb That Was Dead, So That Many More Might Receive Life!
 - Romans 4:19 - “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb!” (Abraham)
- As King, He Offers The Grace Of His Reign!
 - “The Prince Of The Kings Of The Earth!”
 - Without The Reign Of Christ, There Can Be No Peace With God!
 - There Is Just Anarchy!
 - But Jesus Christ Came To Graciously Offer His Kingdom To Us!
 - He Is The “King Of Kings & Lord Of Lords!”
 - Psalm 72:11 - “All Kings Shall Fall Down Before Him!”
 - And Even Though There Is Little Grace & Peace Offered By The “Kings Of The Earth”
 - God Is Over Them All!
- Because Of The Great Offer Of Grace And Peace:
 - We Ought To Be People Of Praise!

4. *Because Of The Great Benefits Of Grace And Peace! (1:5b-6)*

- 1:5b-6a - “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, / And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father!”
 - What Jesus Christ IS He GIVES!
- He Gives Us A Relationship With Him!
 - He “Loved Us!”
 - Because He Is The “Faithful Witness” – He Gives His Grace To Us In The Form Of Love!
 - Desiring & Designing What Is Best For Us!
- He Gives Us A Release From Sin!
 - He “Washed Us!”
 - Because He Is The “First-Born From The Dead” – He Gives His Grace To Us In The Form Of Release!
 - He Released Us From The Bondage Of Our Sin!
 - By Loosening The Chains!
 - He Released Us From The Filth Of Our Sin!
 - By Washing & Cleansing Us!
 - Used Of A Dead Body (Lydia - Acts 9:37) / Used Of Deep Wounds (Paul / Silas - Acts 16:33)!
 - Just What We Needed! Isaiah 1:6 - “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither

- bound up, neither mollified with ointmen!”
- He Gives Us A Royal Position!
 - He “Made Us Kings And Priests!”
 - Because He Is The “Prince Of The Kings Of The Earth” – He Gives His Grace To Us In The Form Of A Coronation!
 - The Coronation Of The Christian Church!
 - The Promise Made To National Israel To Become A “Kingdom Of Priests” (Exodus 19:6) Is Fulfilled To Spiritual Israel – The Church!
 - 1 Peter 2:9 - “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light!”
 - Because Of The Great Benefits Of Grace And Peace:
 - We Ought To Be People Of Praise!

Conclusion:

1. 1:6b - “To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!”
 - This Is Why We Ought To Be People Of Praise!
 - God Has Given You Grace & Peace!
2. And If We Are A People Of Praise – The State Of Our Church Is Good & Strong!
 - Psalm 40:16 - “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified!”

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